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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

B5

DATE: AUG 0 1 2011 Office: NEBRASKA SERVICE CENTER FILE: [redacted]
LIN 08 142 50305

IN RE: Petitioner: [redacted]
Beneficiary:

PETITION: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as a Member of the Professions Holding an Advanced Degree or an Alien of Exceptional Ability Pursuant to Section 203(b)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching your decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of $630. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

Perry Rhew
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The employment-based immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Nebraska Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a university. It seeks to employ the beneficiary permanently in the United States as an assistant professor pursuant to section 203(b)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2). The petition is accompanied by an ETA Form 9089, Application for Permanent Employment Certification, which was certified by the Department of Labor.

The director determined that the ETA Form 9089 failed to demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability and, therefore, the beneficiary cannot be found qualified for classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4). The director denied the petition on October 1, 2008.

On appeal, the petitioner states that a mistake was made on the ETA Form 9089 in failing to designate "Master's" as the minimum educational level.

The AAO conducts appellate review on a *de novo* basis. The AAO's *de novo* authority is well recognized by the federal courts. *See Soltane v. DOJ*, 381 F.3d 143, 145 (3d Cir. 2004).

The record shows that the appeal is properly filed and timely. The procedural history in this case is documented by the record and incorporated into the decision. Further elaboration of the procedural history will be made only as necessary. The AAO considers all pertinent evidence in the record, including new evidence properly submitted upon appeal. For the reasons discussed below, we find that the director's conclusion is supported by the record and by the plain language of the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4), which is binding on us.

Section 203(b) of the Act states in pertinent part that:

> (2) Aliens who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability. --
>
> > (A) In general. -- Visas shall be made available . . . to qualified immigrants who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or their equivalent or who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business, will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy, cultural or educational interests, or welfare of the United States, and whose services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business are sought by an employer in the United States.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4) provides the following:

> (i) *General.* Every petition under this classification must be accompanied by an individual labor certification from the Department of Labor, by an application for

> Schedule A designation (if applicable), or by documentation to establish that the alien qualifies for one of the shortage occupations in the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Pilot Program. To apply for Schedule A designation or to establish that the alien's occupation is within the Labor Market Information Program, a fully executed uncertified Form ETA-750 in duplicate must accompany the petition. **The job offer portion of the individual labor certification**, Schedule A application, or Pilot Program application **must demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability**.

Here, the Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker was filed on April 14, 2008. On Part 2.d. of the Form I-140 petition, the petitioner indicated that it was filing the petition for a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability.[1]

In this case, Part H.4 of the job offer portion of the ETA Form 9089 indicates that the minimum level of education required for the position is "none." H.5 states that no training is required. H.6. states that two years of experience in the job offered is required. H.8. does not state that the petitioner will accept any alternate combination of education and experience. H.9 indicates that a foreign educational equivalent will be accepted.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may not ignore a term of the labor certification, nor may it impose additional requirements. *See Matter of Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant*, 19 I&N Dec. 401, 406 (Comm. 1986). *See also, Madany*, 696 F.2d at 1008; *K.R.K. Irvine, Inc.*, 699 F.2d at 1006; *Stewart Infra-Red Commissary of Massachusetts, Inc. v. Coomey*, 661 F.2d 1 (1st Cir. 1981). USCIS must examine "the language of the labor certification job requirements" in order to determine what the job requires. *See generally Madany*, 696 F.2d at 1015. The only rational manner by which USCIS can be expected to interpret the meaning of terms used to describe the requirements of a job in a labor certification is to "examine the certified job offer *exactly* as it is completed by the prospective employer." *Rosedale Linden Park Company v. Smith*, 595 F. Supp. 829, 833 (D.D.C. 1984)(emphasis added). USCIS's interpretation of the job's requirements, as stated on the labor certification must involve "reading and applying *the plain language* of the [labor certification application form]." *Id.* at 834 (emphasis added). USCIS cannot and should not reasonably be expected to look beyond the plain language of the labor certification that DOL has formally issued or otherwise attempt to divine the employer's intentions through some sort of reverse engineering of the labor certification.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(2) defines an advanced degree as follows:

> [A]ny United States academic or professional degree or a foreign equivalent degree above that of baccalaureate. A United States baccalaureate degree followed by at least five years of progressive experience in the specialty shall be considered the

[1] As observed by the director, the AAO notes that nothing in the record or the provisions of the ETA Form 9089 indicate that the petitioner requests consideration of the beneficiary as an alien of exceptional ability pursuant to section 203(b) of the Act.

> equivalent of a master's degree. If a doctoral degree is customarily required by the specialty, the alien must have a United States doctorate degree or a foreign equivalent degree.

Thus, where experience is not a consideration, the minimum education is a U.S. degree above that of a baccalaureate or the foreign equivalent. Here, "none" was selected as the minimum level of education required. The plain terms of the ETA Form 9089, therefore, contains no education requirement. Therefore, the position does not require a member of the professions holding an advanced degree. Thus, the job offer portion of the individual labor certification, fails to demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability, and the petition may not be approved on this basis. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(4).

As noted above, on appeal, the petitioner states that the selection of "none" on the ETA Form 9089 was a mistake and that the position was advertised using the actual minimum educational requirement.

It remains that neither the law nor the regulations require the director to consider lesser classifications if the petitioner does not establish the beneficiary's eligibility for the classification requested. Additionally, USCIS may not ignore a term of the labor certification, nor may it impose additional requirements. *See Matter of Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant*, 19 I&N Dec. 401, 406 (Comm. 1986). The regulation pertinent to the adjudication of advanced degree professionals specifically requires that the job offer portion of the approved labor certification must demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability.

We cannot conclude that the director committed reversible error by adjudicating the petition under the classification requested by the petitioner and denying the petition because the ETA Form 9089 as certified did not require an advanced degree professional and, therefore, did not support the visa classification selected. Further, there are no provisions permitting the petitioner to amend the petition on appeal in order to qualify it for approval.[2] Going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient for purposes of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. *Matter of Soffici*, 22 I&N Dec. 158, 165 (Comm. 1998) (citing *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972)).

The evidence submitted does not establish that the ETA Form 9089 requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability.

In visa petition proceedings, the burden of proving eligibility for the benefit sought remains entirely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, that burden has not been met.

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[2] A petitioner may not make material changes to a petition in an effort to make a deficient petition conform to USCIS requirements. *See Matter of Izummi*, 22 I&N Dec. 169, 176 (Assoc. Comm. 1998).

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.